

PRESS RELEASE

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CREATIVITY IN ART AND SCIENCE, 1860-1960
September 16 - November 8, 1987

The dynamic relationship between breakthroughs in the visual arts and the physical sciences and life sciences--during a period of tremendous innovation in these fields--is highlighted in *Creativity in Art and Science, 1860-1960*, at The Cleveland Museum of Art from September 16 through November 8, 1987. This exhibition of paintings and sculptures by thirty European and American artists, from Impressionists Monet and Degas to Abstract Expressionists Pollock and Rothko, is part of Cleveland's Michelson-Morley Centennial Celebration.

Edward B. Henning, research curator of modern art at the Museum and for many years chief curator in that department, says "Although works of art and science differ in the way they're formulated--science constructs its forms in mathematical terms, painting in terms of color, shape, and line, and sculpture in terms of mass and space--a common goal is to find beauty and truth in the forms that they create as analogs for their experiences of the world. As our view of the world changes, so do our scientific concepts and our forms of artistic expression." The anniversary of the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment that ultimately proved that the speed of light is unaffected by the motion of the earth, paving the way for Einstein's theory of relativity, is the impetus for Mr. Henning's selection of works by artists whose fresh view of the world became part of the mainstream of Western art.

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As science analyzed light into a spectrum of colors, Impressionist painter Monet achieved the effect of light by assembling patches of prismatic color in La Capeline Rouge (The Red Hood)--Madame Monet (ca. 1870) and Water Lilies (ca. 1919-22). Post-Impressionist Cézanne, in his work La Montagne Sainte-Victoire (1894-1900), substituted relative for absolute space by distorting perspective and shifting viewpoints, overlapping and interlocking the shapes of objects located at various distances from the picture plane.

After Einstein's theory of relativity, first published in 1905, made it impossible to regard time and space as absolutes, both science and art became more subjective. The fragmented perspectives of Cubism--the most radical and influential movement of 20th-century art--paralleled the insistence of physics that our perception of an object is altered by our position in relation to it. As theoretical physicists began to perceive reality as a dynamic web of coherent patterns of energy, Cubists' small translucent planes, defining space as well as material objects, constituted a kind of web across the canvas. Picasso, who analyzed mass and space as the Impressionists had analyzed light, is represented by several works, including his early Cubist painting Fan, Salt Box, and Melon (1909), Delaunay's Eiffel Tower with Trees (1910), Mondrian's Horizontal Tree (1911), Kandinsky's Improvisation 28 (Second Version) (1912), and Brancusi's bronze Male Torso (1917), all show these artists evolving to a pure abstract style from the influence of Cubism.

Sigmund Freud's analysis of the human psyche stimulated Surrealist Joan Miro to make paintings inspired by his subconscious, as seen in the lyrical Constellation: Woman with Blond Armpit Combing Her Hair by the Light of the Stars (1940). In Mallarme's Swan (1944), Robert Motherwell synthesized Surrealism and Abstraction in an early Abstract Expressionist work in which

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form conveys subconscious experience. Franz Klein's Accent Grave (1955) is a single image referring to inner experience--the gesture of an arm and body.

The works in Creativity in Art and Science, 1860-1960 were selected primarily from the collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art, with loans from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, the Fort Worth Art Museum, The Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute Museum of Art in Utica, the J. B. Speed Museum of Art in Louisville, and an anonymous lender. The exhibition is assisted by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

In the accompanying catalogue, available at the Museum bookstore, Mr. Henning discusses major movements in the development of Western art from 1860 to 1960 and draws analogies between these and major developments in the sciences. The catalogue also includes a foreword by Museum director Evan H. Turner and brief essays on the works exhibited.

A complete list of lectures, films, and gallery talks complementing Creativity in Art and Science, 1860-1960 is enclosed. Admission is free.

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For additional information, photographs, color slides, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.